(d) and (e) Further steps taken to assist farmsers of Andhra Pradesh by the Tobacco Board include :—

(i) Recommending construction of any new barn only as a "low profile barn" developed by C.T.R.I. which saves about 15% of fuel;

(ii) Popularising usage of alternative fuels i.e. briquettes made up of agricultural waste like paddy husk, ground nut shells etc. to minimise the usage of wood fuel;

(iii) Conducting demonstration trials for fuel conservation studies like use of paddy straw as insulation material for low cost barn insulation, mud plastering of roof of barn for preventing heat loss, use of alternative fuels like gas etc. and development of cost effective solar barns.

Tobacco Stocks with STC

2480. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be Pleased to state :

(a) whether STC is holding any tobacco stocks presently ;

(b) if so, the quantum of virginia tobacco stocks, with STC;

(c) the quantity of Andhra Pradesh Tobacco presently held by STC;

(d) whether any market has been found for such stocks; and

(e) the details of steps taken to locate new international markets for tobacco grown in Andhra Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) to (c) STC is currently holding a quantity of approx. 3.5 Million Kgs. of Virginia tobacco of Andhra Pradesh.

(d) and (e) Efforts are on to find new markets for export of tobacco from Andhra Pradesh. A delegation of 6 members recently visited Libya, Jordan, Egypt and Algeria in February, 2000 to promote Indian tobacco exports. Another Indian tobacco trade delegation including an STC representative, visited Russia to explore opportunities for tobacco export.

Decrease in Import Items

2481. SHRIMATI BASANTI SARMA : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :